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Governor Baker on Charter Schools: "We Should Celebrate Their Success and Build on It"

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker today testified before the Joint Committee on Education on H.D. 4191, "An Act to Improve and Expand Education Opportunities," which was [filed by the governor last week](#) to add up to 12 new Commonwealth charter schools and/or expansions annually – outside of the current cap of 120 – focusing the growth in districts that are performing in the bottom 25% of districts statewide.

Governor Baker
Gardner Auditorium, Massachusetts State House
October 13, 2015



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Transcription:

GOVERNOR BAKER: Most of the highest performing schools in the Commonwealth are charter schools that serve students located in some of the state's lowest performing school districts. But today, despite all this positive progress, the difference in overall student achievement in underperforming school districts and the rest of the Commonwealth, remains too high while some 37,000 children sit on waiting lists trying to get into the Commonwealth's very successful charter school network. As Rodolfo Aguilar, a parent with two children at the Brooke Middle School in Mattapan said last week, his kids deserve the same education opportunity that kids get in wealthier communities. Our legislation seeks to address this concern. First, it would allow for a modest annual increase in the statewide charter cap focused only in those communities in the greatest need of high quality school options. In addition, this proposal would allow charters greater flexibility in their enrollment lotteries so that they can put preference around high need children, including students with learning disabilities, English Language Learners, low-income students, and other at-risk populations. This bill would give more charter schools the opportunity to create new additional teaching models that can work to serve some of our most underserved students. We stand ready and available to work with you and with others to make sure that all kids here in the Commonwealth have the opportunity to receive the kind of elementary and secondary education that they can build a life and a future on. This is Massachusetts. We are the home of public education, and our charter schools for many kids have lowered the educational opportunity playing field for thousands of children. We should celebrate their success and build on it. The kids deserve it, their parents deserve it, and I know working together we can get this done during this legislative session.

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